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Rachelle Leduc

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The Effects of Parental Separation and Divorce on Closeness in the Adult Sibling  
Relationship

Rachelle Leduc

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In Partial Fulfillment of Graduation Requirements

University of Portland

Department of Communication Studies

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## Abstract

Sibling relationships are one of the most important relationships in a person's life. Approximately 85% of the United States population has at least one sibling. Divorce has also become prevalent in the United States. While researchers have often examined the parent-child relationship after parental divorce and the effect of divorce on young children, little research has been done on the effect of divorce on the adult sibling relationship. The goal of this study is to examine the effect of parental divorce on adult siblings. Nineteen participants from across the United States participated in answering a self-reported survey that inquired about their relationship with their sibling prior to their parent's divorce as well as after their parent's divorce. This research explored whether gender, living situation, time spent with sibling, time passed since parent's divorce, or climate of parent's divorce affected siblings closeness.

*Introduction*

Sibling relationships are one of the most important relationships in a person's life. Not only are sibling relationships involuntary, they are also more permanent than most other relationships, in that they are one of the longest lasting relationships (Mikkelsen, 2006). Furthermore, sibling relationships are egalitarian, which further promotes a stronger and closer relationship between the siblings, often enhanced or decreased through age, physical proximity, similarities, childhood and life experiences, rivalry, and supportiveness (Mikkelsen, 2006). As most people know, siblings often get into fights over a number of things, whether it is over sharing things such as a toy or space, or jealousy and competition, but they are also often one another's best friend. The sibling relationship is one in which a sibling is able to express emotions of loving and liking toward their sibling, while simultaneously engaging in aggressive behaviors, competition and rivalry (Rittenour, Myers & Brann, 2007). The sibling relationship is known to grow and adapt over time as it faces different obstacles and turning points throughout its duration. This may include a sibling leaving for college, facing a death together, getting married or accomplishing something truly amazing together. Sibling relationships evolve over time, and continue to change and adapt at a variety of turning points in the siblings lives. One would assume that most turning points would have a positive effect on relationships. Siblings facing challenges or experiencing great moments together could only have a positive effect on the relationship, bringing the siblings closer together and further enhancing their relationship.

As divorce has become more prevalent in society, much research has been done on the family as a whole and the parent-child relationship, however little research has

been done on the effect of parental divorce on the sibling subsystem (Bush & Ehrenberg, 2003). Afifi and McManus state that about half of all marriages will end in divorce, which demonstrates that divorce is all around us, and a very pertinent issue that should be further studied (2006). In addition, 85% of the United States population has at least one sibling, providing a further reason for there to be research concerning the sibling relationship during parental divorce (Stocker, Furman & Lanthier, 1997).

Therefore, it is important to study the changes in the sibling relationship, as a result of parental divorce, and more specifically, sibling closeness. Siblings exhibit closeness with each other due to a variety of things such as participating in family functions, having common interests, and overcoming family hardships. The purpose of this project is to examine the adult sibling relationship at a particular turning point, the divorce of their parents. This study will determine if the closeness of adult siblings stays the same as it was prior to the divorce, if siblings grow closer together, or if siblings grow further apart after the divorce. This research will explore whether parental divorce has an effect on sibling closeness.

In sum, little is known concerning the outcome of parental divorce on the sibling relationship. The next section will examine the little we do know about the effects of divorce on the sibling relationship and will discuss relevant theory that explains the siblings abilities to maintain relationships.

### Literature Review

After siblings experience the separation or divorce of their parents, one could argue that this occurrence causes siblings to become closer to one another, whereas one may also argue that parental divorce has the possibility of also driving siblings apart (Poortman & Voorpostel, 2009). On one hand, the effect on siblings relationship could be negative as, “the children learned negative patterns of interacting through the experience of parental conflict and divorce (Frank, 2007, p.106),” resulting in more hostile and less supportive sibling relationships (Poortman & Voorpostel, 2009). On the other hand, “sibling relationships could serve as a buffer from the parents’ conflictual interactions, (Frank, 2007, p.107)” and children turn to siblings for needed support. Bush and Ehrenberg note that sibling relationships have been shown to work as a buffer that is supportive, provides stability and security and helps the sibling cope with the stress of the divorce (2003). In fact, little is known of the evolution of the sibling relationship after having been exposed to a parent’s divorce. For example, Frank states that children with divorced parents have a more positive sibling relationship than those from intact families (Frank, 2007), and those with high sibling support experienced fewer problems adjusting and managing their emotions (Shortt & Gottman, 1997). However, Frank also notes that contradictory studies show that children from divorced families tend to have higher levels of hostility and warmth (Frank, 2007). Taken together, the research is equivocal about the impact of divorce on sibling relationships.

While many variables such as age, gender, and proximity could affect sibling closeness, Shortt and Gottman (1997) suggest that communicative warmth rather than demographics contributes to sibling closeness. Nonetheless, Riggio (as cited in Frank,

2007) observed that young adults from divorced families had a lower quality relationship with their sibling than siblings from intact families. Many studies support Riggio's findings.

Research has shown that parental divorce has had damaging effects and penalties on children in numerous ways (Milevsky, 2004). Children beyond the age of eight were found to have less sibling closeness after their parent's divorce. In addition, children, who have experienced a parent's marital conflict, have a higher risk of having a poorer sibling relationship along with poor self-esteem, academic difficulties, higher chances of depression and anxiety, and increased aggression and hostility (Milevsky, 2004). Yet, it is important here to separate the divorce from the conflict. Those siblings, whose parents consistently fight during separation, were found to have a higher risk of poor sibling relations than those whose parents' had a conflict free separation (Frank, 2007). Conflict among the parents often caused stress amongst the children, affecting the sibling relationship by causing children to develop closer sibling relationships relying on one another for support, or causing them to turn towards aggression and hostility to one another (Poortman & Voorpostel, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, Riggio has found that divorce that occurred during late childhood had a higher risk of causing a negative sibling relationship than divorce occurring earlier in childhood. Other findings indicate that age plays no significant difference in the quality of the sibling relationship. However, research also shows that it is better for the divorce to occur later in the child's life, resulting in a more positive sibling relationship. Bush and Ehrenberg (2003) found that the role of age did have a possible positive influence on the sibling relationship in the sense that the older sibling

often served their younger sibling by nurturing them, causing the siblings to form a closer relationship. Siblings found a way to cope by relying on each other, forming a bond to buffer against effects of stress of the parental divorce (Milevsky, 2004). Often these bonds were further enforced due to a lack of parental support, emotional and psychological (Milevsky, 2004). Research thus far on adult sibling relationships following divorce remains ambiguous. In an attempt to explain conflicting results with theory, Milevsky draws on social learning theory (SLT). Milevsky uses SLT to suggest that lack of positive models for handling conflict would later manifest into difficulties maintaining healthy relationships (Milevsky, 2004). Milevsky's participants had less contact, less sibling closeness and support, and communicated less with their siblings. (Milevsky, 2004). Poortman and Voorpostel (2009) also found that children imitate parents' behaviors from fighting to complete silence; siblings would employ these methods to communicate or end communication with their sibling. In addition, Poortman and Voorpostel (2009) found that some parents coached children to choose a side in their conflict resulting in pitting one sibling against the other with resulting negative effects on the sibling relationship. However, unlike Milevsky, Poortman and Voorpostel (2009) found that little difference existed between the frequency of contact or quality of the relationship siblings from divorced families received in comparison to siblings from intact families. Furthermore, in contrast to Milevsky's findings, Poortman and Voorpostel (2009) found that while parental divorce did not always result in increased sibling closeness, parental divorce did improve sibling relationships in cases where high conflict preceded the separation. Overall, researchers find those with positive parent-child relationships during the divorce directly correlated with positive sibling relationships



during the divorce and negativity that existed in parent-child relationships then often existed in sibling relationships (Frank, 2008).

Given the disparity in previous research, the goal of this research is to examine sibling closeness of college students as it might vary in relationship to the siblings' parental divorce. In looking at sibling closeness in connection to parental divorce, the study will also explore whether gender makes any difference as well as whether living together affects overall sibling closeness.

RQ1: Does sibling closeness change as a result of parental divorce?

H1: Sibling closeness increases as a result of parental separation

RQ2: Does gender make a difference in sibling closeness in relationship to divorce?

RQ3: Does living situation affect closeness in relationship to divorce?

RQ4: Does time spent together affect closeness in relationship to divorce?

RQ5: Did the amount of time since the divorce affect sibling closeness post-divorce?

RQ6: Did the climate of the parent's relationship post-divorce affect sibling closeness?

## Methods

### *Participants*

The researcher used a convenience sample and posted announcements of the study using social networks, Facebook and Twitter, along with word of mouth. Adult siblings who had experienced parental divorce or separation at any point in their life, who

currently live in the United States, participated in this study. In cases where participants had more than one sibling, participants selected one sibling as the focus. Participants included three men and 16 women, the majority of which ranged in age from 18 to 25 years ( $M = 21.26$ ,  $SD = 5.36$ ). The average age at which participants experienced their parent's divorce was 13.5 years ( $SD = 6.14$ ); 68% of participants ( $n = 13$ ) had experienced parental divorce before the age of 18 and 32% ( $n = 6$ ) of participants had experienced their parent's divorce at the age of 18 or later. Forty-seven percent of participants ( $n = 9$ ) were sister-sister dyads, 11% ( $n = 2$ ) were brother-brother dyads, and 42% ( $n = 8$ ) were brother-sister dyads. Forty-seven percent ( $n = 9$ ) of participants were the oldest sibling, 47% ( $n = 9$ ) were the younger sibling, and 5% ( $n = 1$ ) were of equal age. Age differences between siblings ranged from zero to eight years ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ).

### *Procedure*

Each participant filled out a consent form, and completed an online 49-question survey. Participants were assigned a random number to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The first part of the survey inquired about the sibling relationship prior to their parent's divorce. The second half of the survey instructed participants to answer question in regards to their sibling relationship after their parent's divorce. Participants used a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (See Appendix A).

### *Measure*

Participants completed a self-reported questionnaire that examined sibling closeness prior to their parent's divorce and after their parent's divorce. The survey was adapted from the *Adult Divorce and Sibling Relationship Interview (ADSRI)* to create

close-ended questions (Bush & Ehrenberg, 2003). The survey examined the sibling relationship in relations to (1) the amount of time siblings spent together, (2) the amount of conflict they encountered, (3) their living situation, (3) their conversations about the divorce, and (4) whether or not they held shared opinions in regards to their parent's divorce. Participants responded to the questions using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree). Participants also indicated the stage of separation their parents are at as (a) just broke the news, (b) separated but not divorced, (c) divorced for 1-2 years, (d) divorced for 3-4 years, (e) divorced for more than 4 years, as well as the current climate of their parents divorce; describing them as either (a) stormy- they continue to argue and emotions are high, (b) cloudy- emotions are high but fighting is less, (c) clear- not fighting openly or (d) sunny- they communicate easily with each other and rarely argue.

## Results

The goal of this study was to examine sibling relationships in relationship to parental divorce.

To determine whether sibling closeness changed as a result of parental divorce, the total closeness of the siblings was calculated prior to the divorce and after the divorce. Mean for total sibling closeness before the divorce was 38.68 and a mode of 32. Mean for total sibling closeness after the divorce was 39.38 and a mode of 31.

Research question two asked whether there was a significant difference between males and females in sibling closeness following a divorce. A t-test revealed no significant difference between total sibling closeness and gender.

Research question three investigated whether siblings perceived that their living situation affected their closeness. Forty-seven percent of participants believed their living situation had a strong effect on their sibling closeness: fifty-three percent of participants reported that living with their sibling after their parents' separation allowed for a closer sibling relationship and further strengthened the existing relationship with their sibling. Many participants indicated that they shared living spaces, shared time, and increased contact that could contribute to sibling closeness.

Another way of exhibiting closeness was in the siblings' discussion of their parents' divorce. Fifty-three percent of participants reported that they discussed their parents' separation with their siblings. While some participants reported conflict and fighting with their siblings, the majority of participants reported that after the argument, they quickly forgot about the problems and had forgiven each other. Thirty-two percent of participants strongly agreed that before the divorce they fought often with their sibling, while only 16% of participants reported fighting often after the divorce of their parents, the majority of which stated they quickly forgot about the argument.

Regardless of the amount of conflict, 63% (n= 12) of participants strongly felt and regarded their sibling as their best friend after their parent's divorce, creating an even stronger bond between siblings. Fifty-two percent of participants increased or maintained the sibling rituals they had created prior to the divorce, after the separation of their parents.

Research question five questioned whether the amount of time since the divorce affected sibling closeness. No significant difference was found in closeness related to the amount of time passed since the divorce.

Finally, research question six looked at the climate of the parents' divorce and sibling closeness. Participants identified the climate of their parents' divorce as stormy, cloudy, clear or sunny. However, no significant difference was found in sibling closeness in relationship to the climate of the divorce.

### Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine how sibling closeness might be impacted by parents' divorce. We examined the sibling relationship prior to the divorce, as well as after the divorce in order to determine if there were any changes in the total sibling closeness at those two points in time. The study also aimed to look at whether gender, living situation, climate of the divorce, stage of the divorce, or time spent together affected the sibling relationship.

Studies have shown that the sibling relationship may be of particular importance when the effects of divorce surface later in life, particularly when dealing with issues in personal relationships, such as trust, fear and commitment (Bush & Ehrenberg, 2003). This study found little to no change in closeness before and after (mean at time 1 = 38.68 and a mode of 32; mean at time 2 = 39.38 and a mode of 31) divorce. Sibling closeness remained approximately the same as it had prior to the divorce. Multiple factors were taken into consideration when examining sibling closeness and their effect or lack of effect on sibling closeness.

Interestingly, gender of the participant had no influence over sibling closeness. While men and women demonstrate closeness in a variety of different ways, the numerous possibilities for closeness were taken into consideration. Women tend to

associate closeness with verbal interaction, while men are more likely to associate closeness with physical activities and gestures, both of which were taken into account (Floyd, 1995). All participants were asked whether they discussed, talked, or shared views and opinions of the divorce, as well as if they participated in any rituals, sports or other activities together accounting for the multiple ways closeness is created and demonstrated. While conflict did arise, participants indicated that they quickly forgot about it. This suggests that these arguments could be considered “squabbles” due to restructuring in a family system, which requires a complete reorganization and redefinition of the family, and can be associated with increased conflict as members of the family are in a period of rediscovering their roles. Overall, males and females essentially maintain the same level of closeness to their sibling across the span of the divorce.

The survey explored whether living in proximity to one’s sibling affected feelings of closeness. It did not. Ninety-four percent of participants stated they lived with their sibling after the divorce and/or were preparing or in the process of leaving for college which is a strong factor in sibling closeness. However, Ross & Milgram (1982) found that shared experiences while sibling still lived at home, led to the most original feelings of closeness. Ross and Milgram (1982) noted that feelings of closeness were enhanced when siblings shared a common space such as a bedroom, or ride to school or practice; or if they lived in isolated spaces from each other such as a sibling leaving for college.

In sharing space, more opportunity may exist for sharing feelings; Bush & Ehrenberg (2003) state that one of the most effective ways in which siblings helped one another was being available to talk about the parent’s separation in a safe and trusted

relationship, which only occurred in relationships where sibling closeness existed. While participants may be reluctant to talk to outsiders about their parent's divorce, they were able to discuss the separation in a safe place with their sibling, and since siblings are often the only person they can turn to, this can be linked to establishing further closeness (Bush & Ehrenberg, 2003). Research showed that discussing the divorce and opening up to one another about something personal led to greater closeness.

Spending time with each other was another factor that led to sibling closeness. Spending time together included rituals, reunions, and celebrations for events such as birthdays and accomplishments. Most often reunions and rituals led to increased family unity within the family system, and enhanced sibling closeness (Ross & Milgram, 1982). After the divorce, the majority of participants reported that they considered their sibling to be their best friend due to an unbreakable bond that had formed.

Research question five asked whether the amount of time that had elapsed since the divorce made any difference in closeness. While the larger amount of time passed since the divorce might allow siblings to have better control and understanding of the changes in the family, no significant difference was found among the participants based on how long it had been since they learned of their parents' divorce. Participants who had just learned of their parent's divorce exhibited the same amount of closeness, as did siblings who had experienced their parents' divorce one to four or more years prior. This suggests that sibling bonds are enduring. Regardless of time lapsed, divorce does not change the sibling closeness that has formed over the years. Furthermore, the participants experienced divorce at a time of normal family transition, which was often preparation to leave for college, thus siblings would have been preparing for a change in the family

system as well as the sibling subsystem. This may explain the results of finding no relationship between the time passed since the divorce and sibling closeness.

An additional factor taken into account was the influence of the parents over the sibling relationship. Social learning theory states that children, who grow up in disharmonious homes, learn to emulate that behavior and therefore lack a positive model for interpersonal and social skills, making it difficult for siblings to maintain healthy relationships (Milevsky, 2004). While 42% of participants report the climate of their parent's divorce as either "stormy" or "cloudy", no relationship was found between the climate of the parents' divorce and the sibling closeness following the divorce. This suggests that the participants may have already developed the essential interpersonal skills needed in order to maintain their sibling relationships, despite the fact that their parent's relationship did not demonstrate the best behavior for a person to imitate. While children of divorce parents typically have the "feeling of being caught" which can lead to conflict in their relationship, the participants did not let the spillover of the divorce damage their sibling closeness (Afifi, & McManus, 2006).

In congruence with Ross and Milgram (1982), we found that gender, living situation, time spent together, time passed since the divorce and climate of the divorce had no effect on sibling closeness. Ross and Milgram (1982), argue that conflict that aroused in siblings after their parent's divorce was already present in those relationships; sibling relationships and closeness prior to the divorce remained relatively the same after the divorce of their parents, which explains the consistency in sibling closeness prior to and after the parent's divorce. Bush and Ehrenberg (2003) cite Ross and Milgram stating



that due to *Relationship Consistency*, divorce did not cause drastic changes in the sibling relationships.

### *Limitations*

Two issues arose in examining and interpreting the findings. First, it was not possible to separate the effects of parental divorce and the normal development of the sibling subsystem. It became evident that changes due to family transitions, and sibling relationship development and evolution were intertwined. A large number of participants are currently attending or preparing to attend colleges and universities, most often separating siblings allowing further reasons for the development of sibling closeness not due to parental divorce.

A second issue is that answers were self-reported with no consensus on the meanings of words such as “best friend”, “fight” and “rituals” with siblings. It was not agreed upon whether fights indicated whether or not it concerned the topic of their parents’ divorce, nor was the meaning of best friend and the characteristics of that relationship discussed, particularly in a sibling relationship.

In addition to answers being self-reported, another issue that arose was the participant’s ability to recall the feelings and events in the past and to separate those from what was currently occurring with their siblings and parents. The survey required that participants first answer questions in regards to their sibling closeness prior to the divorce, followed with questions that examined sibling closeness after the divorce. Since participants must recall emotions, feelings and circumstances prior to the divorce, it is possible that their answers were influenced by their current situation and not accurate

depictions of their actual sibling closeness. Additional statistical rigor in testing might also yield more nuanced data.

### Conclusion

Overall, we were able to determine that divorce did not have an effect on adult sibling closeness, regardless of gender, living situation, time spent together, time passed since the divorce, or climate of the divorce. While these aspects may affect young children and their relationship with their siblings, there was no effect on the adult siblings who participate in this study. This may be attributed to the fact that young adults are not as greatly influenced by the divorce, as they have already developed many of their interpersonal skills, which allows young adult siblings of divorced parents to maintain relationships with each other. Therefore, the closeness they have established with their sibling prior to the divorce remains the same after the divorce of their parents.

Future research should aim to look at pairs of siblings in the relationship to provide a more accurate picture of the sibling relationship. Research on the effects of parental divorce on adult sibling relationships and closeness needs to be continued and further expanded as little is known of the effects on adult siblings. Studies should also look at intact families of similar age group in comparison to siblings whose parents have separated, in order to separate the normal growth of closeness in the sibling subsystem from the growth in the sibling subsystem from experiencing the divorce of their parents.

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## Appendix A: Survey

Directions: Please answer the following questions with one sibling in mind.

Respond to the following questions about your relationship with your sibling PRIOR to your parents divorce.

BEFORE the divorce:

1) I talked to my sibling about things that are important to me

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2) My sibling talked to me about things that were important to him/her

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3) We fought often

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4) After fighting, we quickly forgot about it

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5) I blamed my sibling for my parents divorce

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6) We spent a lot of time together

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7) We played sports and participated in other activities together

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

8) My sibling was my best friend

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9) We were close

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10) We had rituals (i.e. spending certain time together, getting smoothies together, etc)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

---

Respond to the following questions about your relationship with your sibling AFTER your parents divorce.

11) Select all that apply:

- ☐ I lived with my sibling after the separation
- ☐ I did not live with my sibling after the separation
- ☐ My sibling and I both go to different colleges/universities
- ☐ I go to the same college or university as my sibling
- ☐ I currently live with my sibling
- ☐ I share a room with my sibling
- ☐ My sibling lives with my mom
- ☐ My sibling lives with my dad
- ☐ I live with my mom
- ☐ I live with my dad
- ☐ I have my own house

12) Do you think your living situations influenced your opinions about the divorce

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

13) I talk to my sibling about things that are important to me

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14) My sibling talks to me about things that are important to him/her

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

15) We are close

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

16) We have weekly, monthly, daily rituals

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

17) We spend a lot of time with each other

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18) We talk daily

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19) We fight often

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

20) When we fight, we do not talk for days

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

21) After fighting, we quickly forget about it

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

22) My sibling is my best friend

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

23) We play sports and participate in other activities together

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

24) Living with my sibling greatly affected our relationship after the divorce

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

25) Living with my sibling after the divorce brought us closer

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

26) Living with my sibling after the divorce drove us apart

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Neutral            Agree            Strongly Agree

27) We never agree on anything

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Neutral            Agree            Strongly Agree

28) We frequently have similar thoughts and ideas about our family

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Neutral            Agree            Strongly Agree

---

AFTER the divorce:

29) My sibling and I discussed the divorce

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all            Very Rarely        Rarely            Occasionally        Frequently

30) My sibling and I talked about our parents' break up

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all            Very Rarely        Rarely            Occasionally        Frequently

31) My sibling and I shared our views of our parents' situation

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all            Very Rarely        Rarely            Occasionally        Frequently

32) My sibling & I saw eye to eye about our parents' divorce

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all            Very Rarely        Rarely            Occasionally        Frequently

33) My sibling and I disagree about our parents' divorce

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all            Very Rarely        Rarely            Occasionally        Frequently

34) My sibling and I agree about issues in our parents divorce

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all            Very Rarely        Rarely            Occasionally        Frequently

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AFTER the divorce:

35) Since the divorce, things have never been the same

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

36) Since the divorce, we have become inseparable

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

37) My sibling is the only one I can trust

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

38) I tell my sibling everything

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

39) I blame my sibling for my parents divorce

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

40) It is because of my sibling that I made it through my parents divorce

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

41) I see/visit my sibling as much as possible

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

42) What stage of separation are your parents?

- ☐ Just broke the news
- ☐ Separated but not divorced
- ☐ Divorced for 1-2 years
- ☐ Divorced for 3-4 years
- ☐ Divorced for more than 4 years

43) What is the current climate in your parents' divorce?

- ☐ Stormy- They continue to argue and emotions are high
- ☐ Cloudy- Emotions are high but fighting is less
- ☐ Clear- Not fighting openly
- ☐ Sunny- They communicate easily with each other, and rarely argue



44) Gender:

45) Age:

46) How old were YOU when your parents' separated?

47) Age of SIBLING:

48) Gender of SIBLING:

49) How old was YOUR SIBLING when your parents separated?